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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the Community Legal Services law suit and the role played by a large city office of research and evaluation in bringing about its resolution. This law suit was waged on behalf of the Welfare Rights organization against the State Department of Education and, most directly upon the recipient of state-managed Title I funds, a large urban school district. The antecedents of the suit, along with the specific problems created by it are discussed, as is the chronology of events and the persons involved. More important, an analysis of what really happened, its impact upon educational policy within the school district and beyond, and an attempt to get at why it happened are provided. It is suggested that new roles for a research and evaluation unit evolve from a situation such as this. They are discussed in detail as are the implications of the situation for future policy development. (Author/AM)

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THE USES OF SCHOOL-BASED RESEARCH:

AN URBAN CASE STUDY

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Michael H. Kean

I. Introduction

"Who is running the ..... School District?"

"It looks like the courts are," School Board President .... says. "At least that's the way it appeared yesterday."

This statement was made during one of the bleakest points in the four-year saga of the Community Legal Services law suit waged on behalf of the Welfare Rights Organization against the State Department of Education and, most directly upon the recipient of State-managed Title I funds, a large urban school district.

This paper will deal with that court suit and the role played by a large city office of research and evaluation in bringing about its resolution. The antecedents of the suit, along with the specific problems created by it will be discussed, as will the chronology of events and the dramatis personae involved. More important, however, will be an analysis of what really happened, its impact upon educational policy within the school district and beyond, and an attempt to get at why it happened.

New roles for a research and evaluation unit seem to evolve from a situation such as this. They are to be discussed in detail, as will be the implications of the situation for future policy development.

II. Background

One of the largest public school systems in the nation, the district in question serves approximately 260,000 pupils in pre-school and kindergarten programs and throughout grades one to twelve. The district employs over 13,000 teachers and has a total staff of over 30,000 personnel. Next year's operating budget will exceed two thirds of a billion dollars.

Over twenty-seven million dollars of the school district's budget are Title I monies. The funds granted under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 are specifically designed to meet the special educational needs of the educationally disadvantaged. The general aim of the Act is clear; the specific methods of achieving this aim are left to local school districts. Each district draws up its own program and submits that program to the state. The state reviews it for compliance with the law, makes allocations of funds, and periodically reviews progress and assembles statewide statistics for reports to Washington.

It is, therefore, up to the local school district to:

1. Identify the special needs of its educationally disadvantaged children;
2. design projects to meet these needs;
3. establish the specific educational goals of those projects;
4. operate the projects in the schools; and
5. establish whether the goals have been met.

The State Department of Education has attempted to assist this process by providing a set of acceptable objectives for Title I programs. These objectives, which are those most frequently cited for specific Title I projects fall into the following categories:

1. Achievement - measured by tests, reading skills, grades;
2. Ability - measured by tests of general and specific aptitude;
3. Attitudes - indicated by self image and educational and vocational goals;
4. Behavior - indicated by attendance, dropout rate, amount and type of discipline, attention span; and
5. Environmental conditions related to learning - indicated by health, emotional and social stability, clothing, and family conditions, as well as the physical and social characteristics of the school.

Servicing the research and evaluation requirements of the School District, including the evaluation of Title I projects, is the system-based Office of Research and Evaluation. Though some type of research unit has existed in the school system for over fifty years, The Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) did not begin to assume its present scope and size until after the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Since that time, it has grown to include five separate divisions, responsible for evaluating over 300 discrete projects, in addition to providing testing, demographic analysis, survey research, data analysis, instrument development, and research design services. Approximately 110 full-time persons are employed, of which 35 are clerical or support personnel. Of the 75 professional research and evaluation staff members, about 25 percent possess doctorate degrees, while over three-quarters of those who do not, are presently enrolled in post-master's degree graduate studies. The Office functions on an annual budget of approximately $2,600,000.

The goal of the Office of Research and Evaluation is to provide accurate and timely information for decision-makers at all levels. The specific priorities of the Office are:

1. To produce information for decision making (e.g. descriptive, comparative, generalizable) about the major instructional priorities of the School System -- Basic Skills (including reading and mathematics); Early Childhood Programs' Career Education; Exceptional Children; and Alternative Programs.
2. To provide data and information which will enable the School District to develop more efficient instructional and management systems.
3. To develop and present the data and information so that it meets the specific needs of the audiences for which it is intended and so that the information can be used to implement positive change within the system.
4. To provide the technical and non-technical support necessary to shape the process of information gathering and usage.
5. To render service on an on-going basis, so that information on the inputs, processes, and outputs of a project or program are taken into consideration, not merely the product.
6. To design information so that it is clear and meaningful to the audiences to which it is disseminated.

The executive director of the Office of Research and Evaluation is the chief administrator of the Office, and is responsible for establishing policy and monitoring the various functions of ORE. The Office is divided

into five principal units; Administrative and Survey Research Services, Instructional Research and Development Services, Testing Services, Priority Operations Evaluation Services, and Federal Evaluation Resource Services. Each unit is headed by a director.

III. Dramatis Personae

The individuals and organizations involved during the course of this saga read like the cast of characters in a serious drama. In fact, the situation was both serious and charged with the tension that makes good drama what it is.

It is not easy to differentiate the "good guys" from the "bad guys," in that one's perspective of the situation changes rapidly depending upon that side of the fence upon which he stands. In an attempt to minimize value judgements, the characters will be listed simply as adversaries.

Community Legal Services (CLS), a semi-public advocacy group which initiated the law suit was led by a young, bright attorney who viewed the school district as a modern day wild-west town, badly in need of taming. An article by this attorney appeared in a local law journal early in May of 1975 and directly stated this philosophy:

> The next five years should see the first damage actions against teachers and principals for malpractice analogous to medical malpractice. When these cases are won, children and their parents will be able to bring that wild-west town into the 1970's.

Not only is the wild-west view apparent here, but also is the "we've got to make it safe for the women and children" philosophy.

The law suit was brought about by a number of welfare parents on behalf of their children. These parents all belonged to a group called the Welfare Rights Organization (WRO).

The initial law suit was brought against the State, more specifically, the State Secretary of Education who headed the State Department of Education. In that the suit dealt specifically with the allocation of Title I funds, CLS was forced to sue the State, for the State was responsible, by law, for the distribution of such funds, along with monitoring, evaluating and accounting for them. Also involved from the State was the Attorney General's office and a succession of assistant attorneys-general whose job it was to represent the interests of the State and, at the same time, negotiate with the School District and CLS.

The School District, though indirectly involved in the initial law suit, was most clearly viewed by CLS as their major adversary. Most of the School District's top management was involved at one point or another, including the Superintendent of Schools, and the Deputy Superintendent for School Services, to whom the Superintendent delegated the major responsibility for handling the situation.

Also heavily involved were the Executive Director of Federal Programs, the individual directly responsible for all Title I monies coming in and being expended throughout the School District, and the Executive Director of the Office of Research and Evaluation, the person responsible for managing the office which evaluated all Title I programs.

Title I funds also go to non-public, particularly parochial, schools. Thus, the Archdiocese of the schools were also involved, with their Assistant Superintendent playing a major role.

The Board of Education was involved throughout the situation and was constantly advised by the Superintendent as to the disposition of the case. As the group ultimately responsible for School District policy, the Board of Education had to act on the recommendations of the Superintendent with respect to directions which he suggested that the School District take.

An Evaluation and Review Committee, known generally as "The Committee of Three," played a major mediating role in this case. Each of its three members, who, according to the court stipulation, had to be "a recognized expert in the field of elementary and secondary education," were full professors of education at major universities (Temple University; Teachers College; Columbia University; and the University of Chicago).

Also stipulated by the court was a special arbitrator to whom the School District could appeal the recommendations of the Committee of Three. This individual, formerly a superintendent of schools in another large city, was presently also connected with a fourth university and consultant firm.

The final major participants were connected with the legal profession. The School District was represented by both its own Law Department and, during the course of the last year of the saga, by outside counsel. The outside counsel, a partner in a large and prestigious law firm, was formerly president of the local Bar Association.

Also playing a major role in the suit was the U. S. District Court Judge, to whom the case was initially assigned and who retained the responsibility for dealing with it throughout its total of almost four years of arguments and counter-arguments.

IV. The Problem and the Events

Actually, a number of problems precipitated the situation which serves as the basis for this paper and, to a large degree, it is difficult to separate out one or another as being more or less responsible. Certainly the general characteristics of a bureaucracy account, to a large degree, for the inability of the School District to have identified the problem areas before they developed into a crisis. Yet the same bureaucracy ultimately responded in such a way as to deal positively with that crisis.

The frustration of individuals and groups in attempting to communicate with the bureaucracy must certainly be considered a major contributing factor. That frustration may have been caused by the School District's failure to communicate with and to involve the community in decisions. The chairperson of the Parents Union for Public Schools charged, "The parents' right to be fully informed was in this case ordered by the court - yet the school administration failed to comply."

The problem was also representative of a struggle for control of almost $30 million in funds. Included in such control were philosophical questions concerning how the funds might be spent, practical questions concerning the ability to allocate the resources, and political considerations concerning the provisions of jobs, contracts, etc. This struggle for funding control tended to diminish an already questionable level of bureaucratic trust.

The initial CLS law suit filed on behalf of WRO against the State resulted in an Agreement and Stipulation which, from the outset severely hampered the School District's ability to administer the Title I program. The major outcome of the Agreement and Stipulation was the appointment by the defendents, in this case, the State, of an Evaluation and Review Committee, consisting of three members, charged with a variety of responsibilities in reviewing, evaluating and overseeing the School District's Title I program. In general terms, this committee was responsible for the examination and review of program and evaluation reports, the suggestion of changes and/or modifications of Title I projects, the ordering of such changes if deemed necessary and, ultimately, the ordering of termination of reduced funding of certain projects. The power of this Committee of Three included involvement in project objectives, means of assessment, assignment of projects to various levels of priorities, determination of pupil-staff ratio, recommendation of additional expenditure of funds in certain areas, and recommendations concerning the subsequent year's

Title I proposal. In order to allow for the release of Title I funds for the 1973-74 school year, this stipulation was agreed to by the State and the School District.

Also provided for, was the selecting of an arbitrator to whom the School District and/or the State might appeal those recommendations of the Committee of Three which, after negotiations, could not be agreed upon.

In all, four sets of formal recommendations were presented. Preliminary recommendations were made by the Committee of Three on April 25, 1974. After much discussion and negotiation, these recommendations were revised and submitted as a final set of recommendations on June 28 of that same year. A number of the recommendations were appealed to the arbitrator, who handed down his opinion on August 2. Finally, on December 9, the Committee of Three responded to the arbitrator's opinion by handing down a final revised set of recommendations. The major areas of concern addressed by each set of recommendations are listed in Figure 1.

It should also be noted that over 50 meetings, involving a total of several thousand man-hours, were held as part of the process of discussion and negotiation. An attempt to determine the total amount of staff time necessary to deal with the situation would be a pure guesstimate. Generating the necessary additional information alone took several person-years of effort.

The major categories considered by the Committee of Three as deserving special attention in planning the Philadelphia Title I program were as follows:

1. Mastery of basic communicative and cognitive skills (language, reading, writing and computation)

2. Development of affective and social competence (self awareness, fate control, human relations, socialization and politicalization)

FIGURE 1.

April 25, 1974 Preliminary Recommendations of Review Committee	June 28, 1974 Final Recommendations of Review Committee	August 2, 1974 Arbitrator's Opinion	December 9, 1974 Review Committee's Response to Arbitrator's Opinion
Reading General			
1. Title I Reading Director	1. Appoint a reading director	1. Appoint a reading director	1. No Reference
2. Make Reading program decisions at district level	2. District level programs should be consistent within schools in district	2. Supports committee recommendation	2. No Reference
3. City-wide testing & evaluation across all Title I reading programs	3. District evaluation and research should analyze all Title I reading for value	3. Supports committee recommendation	3. No Reference
Reading Elementary			
4. Use conceptually consistent program-reduction to 3-7 programs within a city system	4. Each school above elementary submit a reading plan approved "up the line" to Title I reading director	4. Supports committee recommendation	4. No Reference
5. Each district identify not less than 2, nor more than 3 approaches-terminate everything else (note: 7 districts)	5. Title I reading should be consistent with regularly supported programs-should result in significant reduction in variety of programs	5. Supports committee recommendation	5. Notes a lack of clear statement in application concerning "reduction in variety of reading programs"
6. Use Title I funds to retrain teachers on inventory material before spending funds on additional material	6. Elementary reading specialists 50% time with students	6. Supports committee recommendation	6. No Reference

FIGURE 1. (Continued)

April 25, 1974 Preliminary Recommendations of Review Committee	June 28, 1974 Final Recommendations of Review Committee	August 2, 1974 Arbitrator's Opinion	December 9, 1974 Review Committee's Response to Arbitrator's Opinion
Reading Secondary			
7. Secondary students reading below grade 8 and junior high reading below grade 5 - taught reading as a separate major subject--15 students each class, certified reading teachers, elective course - if short of money, priority to eliminate illiteracy	7. Should provide reading diagnostic services, course work in reading or other procedures - should not replace other courses, can be electives	7. Because of $6 million cost, have district and department review existing programs and determine what needs to be modified to fulfill committee objectives	7. Application provides no information about provisions for programs who score below 5th grade level
Secondary Math			
8. Support secondary math, use management model similar to elementary model CAI	8. Expand to include junior and senior highs. Use management model similar to elementary school model. Secondary students below grade 8 level and junior high students below grade 5 level should be served	8. Supports committee recommendation	8. Application only identifies two schools participating in math program
Management and Quality Control			
9. No reference	9. Diagnostically developed statement-beginning of year and end	9. Supports committee recommendation	9. Application report card "Insert" not adequate
10. No reference	10. Educational inspectors	10. Supports committee recommendation	10. No reference

3. Bicultural and bilingual communicative competence

4. Development of material and psycho-social pupil support (nutrition, health, guidance and community/parent/peer support for development and learning)

5. Development of educational support systems reflective of the differential and individual needs of pupils (qualitative assessment, prescriptive learning experiences, special curricula, staff development)

6. Expansion of alternatives and enhancement of decision making behavior in educational and career planning (career broadly defined as life span planning rather than vocational alone)

When the School District, State, Committee of Three, and CLS were ultimately unable to agree on how resources would be allocated within the above categories, the plaintiff (CLS/WRO) used the courts successfully in delaying payment of Title I funds by the State to the School District. This resulted in the impounding of $27 million of Federal monies payable to the School District, which, at the time, was already running a multi-million dollar deficit.

The School District's courses of action were rather limited. It could either attempt to borrow the $27 million necessary to fund the programs (thus incurring substantial interest costs), or could move to suspend or terminate Title I programs until that point in time when funds were released. Accordingly, the Board president and the Superintendent telegrammed the following message to the State Secretary of Education on February 20, 1975:

> We are appealing to you to release immediately the Title I funds due the School District. Failure to release these funds will result in the termination of all Title I Programs.
>
> It is extremely urgent that we and members of the Board of Education meet with you immediately to discuss the Title I crisis facing the School District.
>
> Please contact us to arrange for a meeting to discuss this crisis.

The Secretary's response to this telegram was swift and direct. While agreeing to meet with the School Board and members of top administration, he took great exception to the School District plans and stated the following position:

1. He would not release the funds in question while there is the slightest doubt as to the School District's total compliance to the recommendations of the Title I Evaluation Committee.
2. He invited the Board of Education to sue him for the monies in question.
3. He indicated a willingness to meet with members of the Board and staff.

The meeting with the Secretary which took place the following week resulted in little assistance. Thus, the plaintiffs and defendants again found themselves back in Federal court.

This time the court order handed down by the U.S. District judge proved to be even more problematic than the initial order, for added to the other contested items was the requirement that the School District provide a free breakfast program for over 100 thousand poverty-level pupils. The School Board president flatly stated that he doubted whether the District had enough money to comply with the requirements of the order. Another School Board member said he was "appalled by the court's order to provide breakfasts." He further stated, "I think the judge has over-stepped his bounds. The school system has a responsibility to deal with education, and not to take on food programs."

The "clincher" in this order was the section providing the court with the right to delegate the expenditure of school system funds to a receiver if the recommendations were not implemented and a satisfactory amount of progress was not achieved. Interestingly, the receiver recommended by WRO was a former School District community relations specialist who reportedly left the district as a result of certain disagreements in philosophy with its leaders.

The CLS attorney was jubilant as a result of the court's ruling. "This is our gift to the Bicentennial celebration," he said. "We are returnirg education to the people."

Following the court order the long, arduous task of discussing and negotiating those steps that would place the School District in compliance began again.

Throughout the months of discussion and the countless meetings the two areas most seriously contended were that of the breakfast program and a mandated diagnostic letter to be sent to parents. Whereas the breakfast program was contended on the basis of inability to provide funds for such services, both the plaintiff and defendant were philosophically in agreement with the purpose for the diagnostic letter. It was the wording of the letter and the metric to be used in reporting scores that created serious problems. (The Office of Research and Evaluation presented voluminous testimony concerning the problems associated with the use of grade equivalent scores and proposed a a variety of alternatives.)

When accordance could still not be reached as of early July, the groups again went back to court. After three days, the hearings were suspended and the plaintiffs and defendants met in judge's chambers. Significant progress was made and before the end of the month agreement was finally reached. The major points of this final agreement are as follows:

1. The judge declared that the School District was not legally required to offer a Breakfast Program but that it would be "a nice idea" to do so.

   It continued to be understood that the only basis on which the School District would add 89 Title I schools to their Breakfast Program was if the State provided them with full and advance funding for any and all costs.

2. The notion of a Receiver was ruled out.

3. The choice of programs to be reduced or eliminated was considered a decision that would be made on staff recommendations to the Superintendent and to the Board.

4. The Time Tables in the earlier Court Order were readjusted.

5. The Junior and Senior High School Mathematics Porgrams were adjusted.

6. The School District agreed to engage the services of a maximum of 91 additional Title I reading teachers to be used in conjunction with its present personnel to accomplish the following:

   .All students below the 16 percentile on the Junior High School level were to receive five additional periods of Reading per week.

   .All students below the 16 percentile on the Senior and Technical High School level were to receive three additional periods of Reading per week.

   .The Office of Curriculum and Instruction, through its Title I Reading Director, was to be responsible for the monitoring of all planned programs throughout the 1975-1976 school year.

   .The Office of Research and Evaluation was to be responsible for an evaluation design; an evaluation process; and an evaluation report to be submitted to the Title I Reading Director and the Executive Director of the Office of Federal Programs.

.Pre and post-testing was to be administered by the teachers involved in the program as organized by the Office of Research and Evaluation.

.A staff development plan was to be organized and implemented by the Title I Reading Director for all teachers who will be involved in this program.

7. The agreements were to be implemented no later than October 1, 1975. In addition, it was agreed that three monitors were to be appointed by the State to assess the School District's adherance to the points listed above.

V. Analysis

An analysis of the situation described in the preceding sections seems to indicate that what precipitated the aforementioned occurrences was a struggle between various interests for control of the School District's Title I capacity. Such control would have directly meant the authority over the allocation of almost $30 million dollars in Federal monies and the rather considerable power associated with such a sum of money.

The struggle occurred for a variety of different reasons unique to the structure of the groups involved. Nevertheless, one can, with any knowledge of the dramatis personae, understand and, perhaps, even anticipate the problems described. This is because the situation represents a typical bureaucratic response to change, and given the literature pertaining to organizational change, the following reasons are not at all unusual:

- Organizations are inherently passive
- Voluntary organizations attract members who agree with their activities
- Organizations tend toward institutionalization and ritualism

- Organizations which provide livelihoods for people tend to come to exist only as livelihoods for these people

- The maintenance of institutional effectiveness or achievement is only one of the problems that institutions must confront in order to survive. Other problems may take precedence over it

Given the notion that the situation represents (1) a struggle for control, set against (2) a typical bureaucratic response to change, one can more readily understand what actually occurred.

The School District, having institutionalized their Title I procedures, naturally sought to retain control of them. The inherently passive nature of the organization mitigated against the District's having initiated change from within. Hence, when the Welfare Rights Organization sought to effectuate certain changes, the School District reacted as a bureaucracy would, when under attack. The battle lines were drawn up rather directly or at least they appeared to have been; WRO attempting to wrest control from the School District in the name of providing better service to the kids, and the School District attempting to maintain control because of their belief, (and probably not an unfounded one), that they were professionals and could do a better job in distributing and managing Title I resources.

CLS attacked the School District and supported WRO, while adopting the mode of a crusader for equal justice under the law for children of poverty families. In actuality, CLS may well have conceived of the entire court suit and utilized WRO as a puppet. CLS, by virtue of its funding, had to serve the community in a legal capacity. And what better way to do so than to serve WRO which nominally represented all poverty families in the city?

The State, particularly the State Department of Education, played a chameleon-like role throughout the situation. Due to its initial posturing in court, it found itself on the defensive, where it remained virtually the entire time. The State attempted to save face, however, by maintaining the role of the middle-man -- between the School District and WRO. In actuality it was the State Department of Education that was sued by WRO, not the School District. The State's inability to deal with the situation did not hurt the State, however, but was passed on to the School District in the form of operational stipulations and freezing of funds. One cannot help but to also raise the question as to whether the State's actions were not also consciously directed toward their desire to "show the School District who was boss."

The Federal government's role was also a multi-faceted one. It was Federal law which WRO (or more correctly, CLS) originally viewed as having been abridged and, of course, it was the Federal courts which handled the original stipulation and the succession of hearings and appeals.

The implications for minorities engendered by the situation are tragically typical. As has so often been the case, the minorities involved, the poor and the black, were caught in the middle. And who suffered the most? The kids!

What occurred was a sports double header. The preliminary game involved two minority groups - the Welfare Rights Organization - a new and vociferous challenger flexing its muscles, and the Title I Parents Advisory Committee, a more traditional, guidelines-based group attempting to work within the system to bring about change. The main event, however, virtually excluded minority concerns. This was the battle staged between the School District and Community Legal Services.

The Office of Research and Evaluation played a rather unique role throughout these events. If not for an error made by the assistant attorney general originally representing the State when the suit was first heard, ORE would never have been directly involved. One of the major allegations against the defense was that Title I programs were not evaluated. The State, in preparing their initial defense, shared a copy of the allegations, including the "lack of evaluation" charge, with the School District and asked that the School District assemble information which the State could use in answering the allegations. The School District's Office of Research and Evaluation provided a brief letter indicating that the charge was sheer nonsense and, in support of that fact, included two cartons containing almost 60 pounds of Title I evaluation reports covering every project ever funded by the School District for every year of Title I funding.

The State's assistant attorney general had only to apply Cardinal Newman's approach "Thus I refute" to the "lack of evaluation" charge by presenting the two cartons of evaluation reports as evidence. Instead, for reasons which have never been explained, he pleaded "no contest."

The Office of Research and Evaluation's Division of Federal Evaluation Resource Services has as its major goal conduct of evaluations of all Title I projects (at the time of the original court suit, in fact, the division was even called TOES - Title One Evaluation Services). In providing Title I evaluation services, interim and final reports were developed containing evaluation findings, and these reports were disseminated to specified decision makers and to the State Department of Education. Projects were evaluated on a sliding scale of intensity, but <u>all</u> projects were evaluated.

Those projects with the highest level of evaluation were characterized by longitudinal designs, multiple measuring devices, continued refinement

of objectives, weekly monitoring, and interim and final reports. At the other end of the continuum, those projects receiving the lowest level of evaluation services still received on-site visits, evaluation consultation, and a final report of the project's results, including an audit of whatever data analysis had necessarily been undertaken.

It is ironical that the Office of Research and Evaluation, initially involved in the court suit through legal error or ineptitude, ultimately provided the information necessary to help settle the dispute. The test data, evaluation reports and diagnostic letter developed, collected and disseminated by ORE enabled the School District to eventually reach settlement.

Other areas which should be mentioned, at least in passing, but which would doubtlessly benefit by further indepth analysis follow:

Fiscal Concerns - As soon as the School District was unable to reach agreement with the plaintiff, the State was prevented from providing the District with their Title I funds. As a result, the District would have been forced to (1) stop services, or (2) borrow money, or (3) increase their deficit budget by an additional $27 million.

Community Concerns - The major community groups were united in their opposition to the suspension of Title I services. The groups, however, all differed in their approach to the situation as can be seen by viewing the approaches taken by the Home & School Association versus that taken by Parents Union.

Political Concerns - The Title of Ronald Dahl's book -- Who Governs -- certainly applies to this situation. The notion of placing the School District's Title I monies in the hands of an educational receiver is particularly unique, for it pre-dated a similar approach taken in Boston by almost a year.

Student Concerns - In a nutshell, there weren't any. Students had virtually no voice throughout the process nor, interestingly enough, did they attempt to raise any questions about the situation or their lack of involvement in it.

Judicial Concerns - The proper role to be played by the Federal government, particularly by the courts, is of major concern here. It was obvious that, in spite of their lack of expert knowledge of the situation, the Courts moved ahead anyway. The general approach supported by the court was that the School District should assume all responsibility for failing to achieve as much academic growth as the court (based on no logical criteria) should choose to mandate. The court's demands were clearly unrealistic. No major city had approached achieving them, nevertheless, they were fought over anyway. At one point during a break in testimony, defense counsel expressed its chagrin by asking, "If the court ordered the medical profession to cure cancer within the year, would it happen? If not, would the court hold the medical schools in contempt?"

VI. New Roles for School Based Research and Evaluation

Based on the events delineated in previous sections, it should appear obvious that a large city school-based research and evaluation office is called upon to serve a variety of masters by providing a rather broad array of products and services. The planned mission of such an office -- the provision of information upon which decisions might be made -- should still be the primary function of a research and evaluation office. It has become increasingly apparent, however, that such offices need to begin to deal with other areas, including those related to policy planning and development. Decision makers often require assistance in making use of

data provided to them so that the best and most logical decisions will result.

Specifically, two types of information should be included in the mission of large city school system research and evaluation office. Information for system development is critical if school district decision makers are to be able to promote positive change. Knowing what we do about the change process, however, we are aware of the role crises play in it. Hence, information for crisis management should also be considered a necessary product of a research and evaluation office. Though crises cannot always be anticipated, the extent to which a system can respond to a crisis will largely be related to the availability of objective data available for use by the crisis manager in resolving the situation.

Included in the provision of information for system development and crisis management are a variety of other vital research and evaluation roles. A listing of these roles might include, but not be limited to the following:

- the provision of comparative data
- the provision of longitudinal data
- serving as an expert witness in court on the objectivity and/or interpretation of data
- the settlement of questions relating to the interpretation and methodology of research studies (a form of "technical arbitration")
- the provision of information directly to clients and interest groups
- serving as a source for the provision and interpretation of data to the news media
- the provision of information which can be utilized to assist decision makers in setting policy

In considering concerns relating to policy, a number of questions might be dealt with -- some prior to the advent of a decision to fund a program, and others during the course of that program's operation and at its completion. An example of the type of questions to which research and evaluation should provide answers, follow:

Concerns prior to funding

- Are the objectives of the program important to the School District's priorities?
- Is the cost of the program per person (per unit) questionable/ appropriate/reasonable?
- Are there alternative means of funding this program?
- Are there alternative ways of accomplishing the objectives of the program?
- What would the impact of maintaining the same level, expanding, or terminating the service, be on the community in terms of public support of education?

Concerns during program operation and at the completion of the program

- What is happening?
- Are the objectives of the program being met? What is the evidence?
- Does the program seem to be operating effectively?

VII. Implications and Conclusions

The situation described in this paper is symptomatic of the desperate state of the urban situation. Psychological studies show that an organism devoid of hope is willing to follow any leader who offers "a way out."

What nas occurred here should not be construed as a situation so desperate as to have engendered a willingness to blindly follow a new leader. WRO was not desperate. They had, in fact, been making progress in achieving a number of their aims. They were, however, moving very

slowly and were suddenly confronted with a "rival" organization (the Title I Parents Council) who appeared to have the inside track in effecting change, (by working within the system). The conflict which resulted, and the crisis it produced, has formed the nucleus of this paper.

Large urban public school systems typically exhibit the following characteristics:

- The purposes of such institutions are basically conservative, and their support is secured from generally conservative sources.
- Educators are extremely independent, autonomous professionals within the structure of the public schools.
- Public schools are deliberately structured to resist change by virtue of a system of fragmented bureaucracy.

In spite of the above constraints, change does take place. The institution, by its very nature, must at some point comply with the needs of its constituents. Simon notes that:

> In order to survive, the organization must have an objective that appeals to its customers, so that they will make the contributions necessary to sustain it. Hence, organization objectives are constantly adapted to conform to the changing values of customers, or to secure new groups of customers in place of customers who have dropped away.

The process of change is crucial, then, to the survival of an organization.

Educational inertia is also an institutional fact of life, however, and no manner of pleas for change will alone accomplish change. Exhortation is an inadequate tactic; pressure is often a more realistic strategy. The information and services provided by offices of research and evaluation, if utilized for decision making, may serve to relieve such pressures, stablize the system, and eventually lead to positive change.